



JIM DOYLE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF WISCONSIN

April 14, 2006

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE:

I am vetoing Senate Bill 501, relating to reimbursement of certain attorney's fees and other litigation costs.

I am vetoing SB 501 because it removes the discretion of judges when dealing with frivolous claims and adds confusion to the existing rules. Current law already authorizes courts to impose sanctions, including the award of expenses and attorney fees, against litigants who bring frivolous lawsuits. The existing rules, passed just last year, are the product of a two-year long, Wisconsin Supreme Court rule-making process and are structured to provide Wisconsin courts with a variety of tools to best deal with and deter frivolous filings. These rules are supported by those representing both sides of the table – both plaintiff and business interests – and I believe they give judges what is necessary to punish and help reduce the filing of frivolous lawsuits in Wisconsin.

I agree that frivolous lawsuits are a concern, but we shouldn't be passing laws that strip elected judges of the tools that both the plaintiff and defense bar agree judges need, and force their hand to treat every frivolous claim exactly the same. SB 501 would do just that, and I cannot sign it into law.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM DOYLE
Governor